

X - A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

At the close of its second decade the Denton Bach Society is a firmly established institution in the city of Denton and in the larger metropolitan area. A robust musical creature even in its infancy, it is moving steadily toward adulthood.

This has not come about without some severe economic and other challenges, but these have always been overcome by dint of hard work on the part of its choir members and officers, and by imaginative leadership.

At the beginning of its third decade, the Denton Bach Society is poised at the cusp of a new phase of musical and organizational expansion. Music Director Henry Gibbons has pointed out two major challenges in the Denton Bach Society's upcoming years: the development of financial stability and the recruitment of singers.

The Bach Choir has always been, and will continue to be, the core of the Denton Bach Society, both as the major contributor of music and as a source of talented and committed workers. But its voice and volunteerism are not to be taken for granted. The Bach Choir has had dozens of veteran singers, and many of them are still going strong. But in the future, additional young, devoted singers will need to be recruited to replace old-timers. Fortunately, the two major universities in Denton provide a rich lode of talent and enthusiasm among their students and their faculty members. In any case, it will be important for the choir to continue to develop another moving core of veteran performers.

Adequate funding has always been, and surely will continue to be, a major challenge. But here, too, there is cause for optimism. "Denton is a city that has a commitment to the Arts," says Richard Edyvean, long-time choir member and officer of the Bach Society. Edyvean was president of the organization during the years when financial support was waning and the Society's future was precarious, and he knows well the city of Denton's role in supporting the Arts. Says Edyvean, "[Denton] people do attend musical events, they actively participate in the theatre group, and they go to the art galleries. And there is a solid base of many individuals who contribute their talents and time to the business of fund raising for the Greater Denton Arts Council, the umbrella organization under which all the arts groups operate." As the Denton Bach Society has become increasingly visible, the prospects for more donors and for greater support from the business community are enhanced.

The formation of the DBS 100 during the organization's twentieth anniversary season has had a good start, with the recruitment of thirty-five charter members. This body, which is open to any person or organization that will contribute \$125 dollars or more each year, should go a long way toward

providing the Society with a firmer financial base. This, in turn, should make possible the expansion of its musical offerings, and generally provide for longer range programming and innovative planning.

The Bach Society's newfound home in the Campus Theatre in Denton, as a performance center and as a location for its organizational headquarters, will be very helpful. It will, for the first time, provide space for the Society to keep its records and to carry out its day-to-day functions. To this end, the Board of Directors has established a new, paid position of Executive Director. Julian Long, veteran singer and officer of the Society, has been appointed to fill this post.

"I'm very excited about having this opportunity," said Mr. Long in the *Denton Record-Chronicle* after his appointment. "We would like to be more professional in the way we do business as well as in the way we perform," he said.

The Denton Bach Society has one other major asset that bodes well for its future; it has Mr. Henry Gibbons. His credentials as musician and as organizational leader have been well established. Mr. Gibbons' stature was further enhanced in the spring of 1996 when he was appointed to the post of Music Director of the Arlington Choral Society (a group which joined with the Denton Bach Society, under Mr. Gibbon's direction, to present Haydn's *The Creation* at the close of the 1994-95 season).

Mr. Edyvean says that..."singing for Hal Gibbons is more than just singing for Hal Gibbons. It is the level of expectation he has for amateur singers. He sets high standards and the choir senses that. Mr. Gibbons is so knowledgeable about composers and the music...every rehearsal of every piece is an education."

All together, for the Denton Bach Society there is much to be excited about as it begins its 21st season--and looks ahead to the 21st century.